



MOUNTAIN RAIN ZEN COMMUNITY CHARTER

Adopted on April 24, 2022 | Last updated on March 31, 2025

PREAMBLE

The Mountain Rain Zen Community (MRZC) Charter is an evergreen document that supplements the MRZC [Constitution and Bylaws](#). It is intended to guide and inform the Society's governance toward greater efficiency, effectiveness, adaptability and cohesiveness. While Council is responsible for managing and updating this document, Standing Committees are encouraged to contribute, borrow and adapt elements of the Charter for their own purposes, as needed. Everyone is invited to make recommendations to help Council further improve this shared resource.

For questions and further guidance on this document, please contact council@mountainrainzen.org.

TABLE OF CONTENT

PREAMBLE	1
TABLE OF CONTENT	2
LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
SECTION 1 – STATEMENT OF ETHICS	4
SECTION 2 – GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW	6
SECTION 3 – POLICIES	8
MEMBERSHIP POLICY	8
COUNCIL ELECTION AND OFFICER APPOINTMENT POLICY	10
PRIVACY POLICY	12
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (“Google Workspace Policy”)	14
RESIDENTIAL RETREAT (SESSHIN) REGISTRATION POLICY	21
INTERIM RESIDENTIAL RETREAT (SESSHIN) SUBSIDY POLICY	22
ENDOWMENT FUND POLICY	23
PURCHASES AND REQUISITIONS POLICY	25
GIFTS-IN-KIND POLICY	28
HIRING AND SUPERVISION POLICY (“HR Policy”)	29
GRIEVANCES & RECONCILIATION POLICY	30
SECTION 4 – SHARED PRACTICES	33
COMMUNICATION PRACTICES	33
GUIDELINES FOR A TRANS-INCLUSIVE SANGHA	34
SECTION 5 – COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE	37
MANDATE, MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION	37
COUNCIL POSITIONS	37
President (Chair)	37
Vice President (Vice Chair)	39
Treasurer	39
Secretary	40
General Directors	40
GUIDELINES ON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS	42

LIST OF ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are used across Mountain Rain’s documents and software. They are arranged in alphabetical order.

AGM – Annual General Meeting
AMCS – Aboriginal Mother Centre Society
BC – British Columbia
CBO – Capacity Building & Operations Committee
CRA – Canada Revenue Agency
CWG – Communications Working Group
DEIA – Standing Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility
DL – Distribution list (for emails)
EBPG – Engaged Buddhist Practice Group
ERB – Ethics & Reconciliation Board
ERO – Ethics & Reconciliation Officer
FIN – Finance Committee
FWG – Fundraising Working Group
HAB – Health Advisory Board
HRB (also “**HR Board**”) – Human Resources Board
HRO (also “**HR Officer**”) – Human Resources Officer
ITO (also “**IT Officer**”) – Information Technology Officer
ITWG – Information Technology Working Group
MRZC – Mountain Rain Zen Community
PC – Practice Committee
PIPA – *Personal Information and Privacy Act* (British Columbia)
RPWG – Residential Practice Working Group
SPSC – Strategic Planning Steering Committee (retired)
ZenYU – Youth Urban Zen (practice program)

SECTION 1 – STATEMENT OF ETHICS

1. **Mountain Rain’s Ethical Framework** – The Mountain Rain Zen Community (MRZC) is dedicated to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and ethical environment for Zen practice. As a community, we regularly engage in zazen meditation, Buddhist ceremonies, and communal gatherings. Our ethical framework centers around inclusivity, respect, and compassionate engagement, encouraging all individuals to engage in practice free from discrimination based on class, race, color, sex, gender identity, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, or sexual orientation.
2. **The Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts** – At the heart of MRZC’s ethical practice are the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, which guide our interactions, both within and beyond the community. These include the Three Refuges, the Three Pure Precepts, and the Ten Clear Mind Precepts, each providing a foundation for ethical living rooted in mindfulness, respect, and the desire to alleviate suffering.
3. **The Three Refuges: *Core of our practice*** – The Three Refuges represent our deep commitment to the foundational elements of Zen practice.
 - a. **We take refuge in the Buddha** – We commit to respecting the inherent nature of awareness and awakening within ourselves and others. This recognition of Buddha-nature guides our interactions with integrity and mindfulness.
 - b. **We take refuge in Dharma** – We are committed to living with an open heart and mind, seeking a deeper understanding of life’s complexities with sincerity. This commitment calls on us to foster clear and compassionate understanding in our relationships.
 - c. **We take refuge in Sangha** – As a community, we honor our interconnectedness with all beings. This refuge is our aspiration to cultivate inclusivity, open communication, and mutual support, embracing both unity and diversity.
4. **The Three Pure Precepts: *Our ethical intentions*** – The Three Pure Precepts serve as ethical aspirations that reinforce our dedication to reducing suffering and fostering well-being. We vow:
 - a. **To avoid all action that creates suffering** – We strive to refrain from actions, words, or thoughts that may harm others or ourselves, embodying restraint as a foundation for compassion.
 - b. **To cultivate good** – Our actions aim to promote a lasting, sincere sense of happiness and well-being, grounded in the well-being of all.
 - c. **To act with others always in mind** – We commit to unselfish actions that promote happiness, serving the needs of others and the broader community.
5. **The Ten Clear Mind Precepts: *Maturity in practice*** – The Ten Clear Mind Precepts outline specific ethical guidelines for practicing mindfulness and respect. We vow to:

- a. **Nurture life** – We value the dignity of all life, committing to kindness and respect for all beings.
 - b. **Practice generosity** – Generosity underpins our interactions, fostering openness rather than fear.
 - c. **Respect boundaries in intimacy** – We honor healthy boundaries, cultivating respectful and compassionate relationships.
 - d. **Encourage truthful communication** – Truthfulness is essential, fostering trust and transparency.
 - e. **Seek clarity and awareness** – Avoiding harmful substances and rigid beliefs, we cultivate an open and clear mind.
 - f. **Speak with kindness** – We aim to communicate from a place of understanding, regardless of differences.
 - g. **Practice humility** – We refrain from self-promotion and cultivate a humble and inclusive attitude.
 - h. **Encourage mutual support** – We embrace interdependence, generously offering time, energy, and resources.
 - i. **Forgive and let go of anger** – Forgiveness fosters harmony, helping us resolve conflicts with honesty and compassion.
 - j. **Support the Triple Treasure** – Honoring Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, we commit to nurturing and upholding the teachings and our community.
6. **Application** – Through these ethical commitments, MRZC fosters a space where all are welcome to practice with integrity, compassion, and respect for one another.

SECTION 2 – GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

1. **The Societies Act** – In British Columbia, non-profit organizations are incorporated and governed by the [Societies Act](#). The Act entrusts the governance of the Society to members. In turn, the members choose a smaller group of people to be responsible for the Society by following its bylaws and other laws that apply. This responsibility constitutes the general mandate of Mountain Rain Zen Community (MRZC) [Council](#).
2. **MRZC Bylaws and Constitution** – The Society is governed according to the MRZC [Constitution](#) and [Bylaws](#), which are supplemented (not replaced) by the policies and guidelines presented in this Charter.
3. **Council and Standing Committees (Decentralized Governance Model)** – MRZC operates under a decentralized governance model where Council delegates certain authorities to Standing Committees. As such, the governance of MRZC is the collective responsibility of the following governance bodies:
 - a. **Council** – Council is entrusted with overseeing the Society’s governance on behalf of MRZC members. Council is collectively accountable to the members, community, funders and other stakeholders. For more information, please refer to [MRZC Council Terms of Reference](#).
 - b. **Standing Committee on Finance (FIN)** – The role of FIN is to support the Treasurer in preparing and tracking an annual budget for the Society (to be reviewed and approved by Council); preparing financial reports for review and discussion by Council at regular Council meetings; and preparing pricing for programming and retreats, for review and approval by Council. For more information, please refer to [FIN’s Terms of Reference](#).
 - c. **Standing Committee on Capacity Building and Operations (CBO)** – CBO was created as a result of Mountain Rain’s strategic planning process, which emphasized the need for capacity building. Its role is to develop strategic processes and governance tools of relevance to MRZC, including a communications strategy and other operational policies and procedures, with the aim of unburdening our Guiding Teachers and streamlining tasks between committees and volunteers.
 - d. **Standing Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)** – The role of DEIA is to assist MRZC in fulfilling its mission to provide “a place of refuge, inclusion and diversity for longtime practitioners as well as students new to Zen Buddhist practice.” DEIA strives to remove barriers to inclusivity, confront our own assumptions (e.g., through educational tools and trauma-informed practices), and foster deeper understanding of community members. For more information, please refer to [DEIA’s Terms of Reference](#).
 - e. **Ethics and Reconciliation Board (ERB)** – The role of ERB is to administer [MRZC’s Grievances and Reconciliation Policy](#) and provide guidance and support to teachers,

leaders and membership. The policy is intended to help ensure a safe practice environment and address possible ethical violations within the Sangha.

- f. **Practice Committee (PC)** – The role of PC is to assist and support the practice leaders, our Guiding Teachers, in carrying out the day-to-day operations of the community in line with the established traditions and doctrines of Soto Zen Practice. For more information, please refer to [PC's Terms of Reference](#).

SECTION 3 – POLICIES

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

[First adopted by Council on April 7, 2023]

1. **Membership Diversity and Inclusion** – Our membership is open to everyone, regardless of race, religion, nationality, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, or physical ability. We seek to embody inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility throughout our teachings, practice, organizational culture, policies, and operations as a manifestation of our vow to awaken together with all beings.
2. **Membership Benefits and Responsibilities** – While membership is not a prerequisite to practicing with Mountain Rain, it is a commitment to the long-term sustainability of our Society. MRZC Members get special benefits for such commitment.
 - a. **Governance and Voting Rights** – Members have the right to vote in General Meetings if they have been members for at least four weeks prior to the meeting. They can also run for Council or join Standing Committees of the MRZC Society.
 - b. **Practice Privileges** – Members may occasionally get practice privileges at the discretion of the Practice Committee, including advance registration notice for popular retreats or events, and exclusive access to certain practice opportunities (e.g., residential practice).
 - c. **Active Contributions** – Members are expected to play an active role in the ongoing functioning of Mountain Rain through volunteer work, monetary donations, and/or gifts-in-kind, as far as each member is able.
 - d. **Legal Duties** – Members are required to uphold the Society’s Constitution and Bylaws.
3. **Membership Process**
 - a. **Application** – Applications are accepted through the MRZC website. In the application, prospective members are required to express their interest and commitment to Mountain Rain.
 - b. **Fees** – Council is responsible for setting annual membership fees and reserves the right to eliminate them, unless otherwise decided by members at the AGM.
 - c. **Annual Renewal** – Membership cycles are synced with the calendar year. While membership may start in any month of the year, it must be renewed at the beginning of each calendar year.
 - i. **Renewal Reminder** – An official request for renewal will be emailed to all members on an annual basis.

- ii. **Grace Period** – Members will be given a four-month grace period to renew their membership at the beginning of the calendar year. If a General Meeting is scheduled during that period, they will be invited to attend as Members.
 - iii. **Reinstatement** – Anyone who has ceased to be a member due to failure to renew their membership may apply to be reinstated as a member, unless they were expelled (see the subsection on “Expulsion” below).
- d. **Termination** – A person ceases to be a member of the society under the following conditions.
 - i. **Expiration** – Memberships expire and must be renewed at the end of each calendar year. An official request for renewal will be emailed to all members on an annual basis (see the section on “Annual Renewal” above).
 - ii. **Resignation** – A member may terminate their membership any time by offering their resignation in writing to MRZC Council or Membership Officer.
 - iii. **Expulsion** – A member may be expelled by a special resolution of the members at a general meeting. The resolution must be accompanied by a reasonable explanation for the proposed expulsion, and the person subject to expulsion must be given an opportunity to be heard by the general assembly before the special resolution is put to a vote.
 - iv. **Death** – A membership is automatically terminated with a member’s death.
- 4. **Delegation of Authority for the Approval of New Members** – Council may delegate authority for the approval of new members to the Capacity Building and Operations Committee (CBO) through a designated Membership Officer in accordance with this policy. Operational tasks may be further delegated to an administrative assistant or externally hired personnel.
- 5. **Non-Member Supporters and Practitioners** – Many donors and volunteers choose to contribute time, money and/or other resources to our Society without becoming members, for various reasons. We are grateful for the ongoing generosity of our non-member supporters. We also welcome everyone to join our general sitting periods, whether a member or not, and regardless of ability to offer time, money or energy.

COUNCIL ELECTION AND OFFICER APPOINTMENT POLICY

[First adopted by Council on January 29, 2023. Last updated on August 23, 2024.]

1. **Elections** – Council Directors are elected or acclaimed by the Society’s membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), provided there is a quorum of ten MRZC members. The maximum number of seats on Council is eight, including four seats for *General Directors* and four seats for *Directors with Officer Roles*, or “Council Officers” (i.e., the seats of *President*, *Vice President*, *Treasurer* and *Secretary*). The following guidelines have been determined by Council to facilitate the election process, in accordance with MRZC bylaws:
 - a. **Nomination**
 - i. **Eligibility** – Every year, all eight Council seats are open to MRZC members in good standing for nomination. The seats of General Director (4 seats), Secretary (1 seat) and Vice President (1 seat) are open to all members in good standing. The Council Officer seats of President and Treasurer are open only to members with prior experience serving on Council or chairing a Standing Committee at MRZC. Members with no prior experience serving on Council or Standing Committees are encouraged to run as *General Directors in Training*.
 - ii. **Expression of Interest** – Council sends out a call for nominations at least 40 days before the AGM. Eligible members have 30 days to express their interest to run for Council as a General Director, or as one of the four Council Officers (i.e., President, Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary). They may express interest in up to three seats, to be presented in the order of their preference, including a brief outline of their qualifications for each seat.
 - iii. **Nomination Deadline** – Nominations close at least 10 days before the AGM. In compliance with clause 25 of MRZC Bylaws, Council may decide to extend the deadline for one or more seats if there are fewer than five nominations, or if nominations do not cover the four officer seats of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. No nominations may be accepted past the deadline set by Council.
 - b. **Reelection**
 - i. **Eligibility** – All Council Directors in good standing are eligible for reelection as General Directors and/or Council Officers. There is no limit in the bylaws on terms of service at this time.
 - ii. **Reelection to Complete Two Years in Office (Vote of Confidence)**: To encourage commitment and continuity, General Directors and Council Officers are requested to serve for at least two years. As such, incumbents with only one year of service are encouraged to run for reelection at the AGM: a) to reaffirm their commitment

to their role, and b) for the membership to reaffirm confidence in their capacity to continue serving on Council.

- iii. **Reelection to Serve beyond Two Years in Office:** While the bylaws set no limits on terms of service, MRZC is committed to leadership diversity and capacity building across the Sangha. If more than eight candidates run for Council, incumbents with more than two years of service may wish to consider making room for others. Council Officers with more than two years of service are encouraged to step down or run for different seats to open up opportunities for other eligible candidates, where applicable.
- c. **Election or Acclamation** – Council Directors are elected or acclaimed by the Society’s membership at the AGM, provided there is a quorum of ten members. Eligible candidates may be elected or acclaimed in absentia.
 - i. **Acclamation** – If only one candidate runs for a given seat, they may be appointed by acclamation at the AGM. If one or more objection(s) are voiced from the floor, an election by show of hands is held to confirm support from a supermajority of more than 70% of the assembly.
 - ii. **Election** – If more than one candidate runs for the same seat, an election is conducted by ballot at the AGM. Candidates are eliminated until a winner secures more than 50% of the vote from the assembly. Two volunteers will be selected to count and report ballots in person and on zoom.
 - iii. **Voting Eligibility** – All MRZC members in good standing may vote (or abstain from voting) in-person or on zoom at the AGM. Members cannot vote in absentia nor by proxy. Guiding Teachers do not vote at the AGM.
- 2. **Appointment of MRZC Officers** – Once elected, the new Council reviews expressions of interest for the MRZC Officer roles listed in the [MRZC Directory](#), including Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, and votes to confirm their appointment. Leadership roles for the Practice Branch are reviewed and voted on by Council at the recommendation of the Guiding Teachers. All MRZC roles must be listed in the MRZC Directory to ensure transparency and accountability.
- 3. **Retirement and Continuity Planning** – Council Directors and MRZC Officers retire from office once their successors are elected or appointed. Officers are expected to onboard their successors and remain accessible for advice, where needed, for at least two months after retiring from their role. If a successor is not elected or appointed, the incumbent officer continues to hold office.
- 4. **Council Terms of Reference** – For information about the roles and responsibilities of Council Directors, please refer to the MRZC [Council Terms of Reference](#).

PRIVACY POLICY

[Adopted before April 24, 2022]

1. **Privacy Policy** – The Society is committed to protecting the privacy and security of personal information held about its patrons. Our purpose is to assure anyone who practices with us that the Society complies with BC's *Personal Information and Privacy Act* (PIPA) and Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation. This policy explains how we collect, use, disclose and safeguard personal information.
2. **Definition of Personal Information** – Personal information is any information that is identifiable to you as an individual. This may include, but is not limited to, your name, gender, age, date of birth, language of correspondence, mailing address, telephone number, fax number, email address, and membership in an organization. Personal information does not include publicly available information about you in your capacity as an employee of an organization such as your name, job title, work mailing address, work email address, work fax number, or work telephone number.
3. **Collection and Management of Information**
 - a. **Collection of Information** – The Society only collects personal information from: attendees, donors, members, volunteers, and others who have shown an interest in the Society. This information is collected by a variety of methods: phone, fax, mail, email, social media, online, or in-person
 - b. **Use of Information** – The Society may use personal information for the following purposes to better serve our patrons and to expand our community of support. Personal information may be used for various purposes, including:
 - i. To deliver services and to provide information about events, membership, and donations;
 - ii. To thank supporters, fulfill subscriber and donor benefits and issue tax receipts;
 - iii. To invite supporters to events;
 - iv. To promote events and activities and to solicit donations and membership applications;
 - v. For service phone calls and emails;
 - vi. For audit purposes.
 - c. **Disclosure of Information** – The Society treats its obligations with respect to the use and disclosure of personal information very seriously. Generally, we will only use or disclose personal information for the primary purpose that it was collected or for a purpose related to the primary purpose that you would reasonably expect it to be used. The Society will not sell, rent, or share your personal information.
 - d. **Storage of Information** – Personal information is stored in our database(s) on a secure server and/or in hard copy files. Only authorized Society personnel have access to this

information. The Society uses personal information to better serve our patrons and to expand our community of support.

- e. **Stewardship of Information** – The Society is committed to using personal information in a respectful and useful way. The Society is also committed to making sure patrons do not receive more than a reasonable number of emails, letters, or phone calls.
4. **Online Privacy** – The Society is committed to protecting the privacy of those who use our website.
- a. **Statistical Information** – While the Society does not collect personal information about individuals browsing our website, it does collect statistical information through a log file which indicates number, length, and frequency of page visits, external links redirecting users to our website, and which browser, operating system, and type of device (mobile or desktop) was used to access our website. This information is analyzed to help us develop content that responds to the interests of our website visitors.
 - b. **Analytics** – The Society’s website uses Google Analytics to track usage of our website for reporting and evaluation purposes. Google Analytics uses first-party cookies to report on user interactions on Google Analytics customers’ websites. These cookies are used to store non-personally identifiable information. Browsers do not share first-party cookies across domains. For further information on the privacy policy concerning Google Analytics, please see <https://policies.google.com/privacy?hl=en-US>.
5. **Accountability** – The Society does its best to ensure that all information is recorded accurately.
- a. **Reporting errors** – If you notice any errors in our correspondence with you or if your personal information changes, please contact us at info@mountainrainzen.org to update your file.
 - b. **Opting out of MRZC Communications** – If you do not wish to be contacted by phone, mail, or email, please contact us and we will ensure that your request is honoured.
 - c. **Further Questions about this Policy** – If you have any questions about the Society’s privacy policy or concerns about the way that your information is being used, please contact us.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (“Google Workspace Policy”)

[First adopted by Council on September 24, 2023. Last updated July 15, 2024.]

1. **Purpose** – This policy outlines general guidelines with the aim of fostering best practices in the management of the Society’s data and information resources through the use of GoogleWorkspace and its associated features. Mountain Rain uses Google Workspace to create, store, share and manage data and information for the benefit of the Sangha.
2. **Delegation of Authority** – The community-wide governance of GoogleWorkspace, including this policy, is the responsibility of Council. Technical, operational and maintenance tasks pertaining to the system are delegated to the Capacity Building and Operations (CBO) Committee through the IT Working Group (ITWG) under the leadership of IT Officers (ITOs). As such, the ITOs may work with the Council President to make non-substantive changes to this policy without Council approval, including updates to operational guidelines that improve system usability in line with the guiding principles listed below.
3. **Guiding Principles** – The use of Mountain Rain’s Google Workspace is governed by principles of functionality, transparency, privacy, accountability and organizational cohesion, including diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) considerations.
 - a. **Functional Access (Definition of “Users”)** – Members, volunteers, contractors and/or employees of Mountain Rain are granted access to GoogleWorkspace based on their need to use the system. The system “users” are the administrative and practice leaders and volunteers listed in the [MRZC Directory](#), including all members of Council, standing committees, working groups, advisory boards and practice groups. Once a user is granted access to the system, they may keep their account indefinitely unless they are terminated or expelled as outlined in the final section of this policy.
 - b. **Transparency (“Open by Default”)** – Mountain Rain is committed to process transparency, which is a foundational principle for a diverse, inclusive, equitable and collaborative sangha. All users are expected to work in the open by default unless there is reasonable justification for certain information to be restricted to protect the privacy of individuals. As such, open-access folders, files, data and information must be accessible to all system users for viewing and commenting. Restricted files must be listed in Table 1 of this policy to enable any user to conduct a basic inventory of the system’s content.
 - c. **Privacy (Restricted Information)** – Mountain Rain is committed to protecting the privacy of its members, in compliance with the *BC Personal Information and Privacy Act* (PIPA) and the [MRZC Privacy Policy](#). As such, access to some personal information pertaining to members must be restricted for specific and justifiable reasons. Restricted files must be listed in Table 1 of this policy with reasonable justification at the discretion of Council. The ITO may grant access to folders on a “need to know” or “need to do” basis, at the request of the accountable lead, chair, Council or the Guiding Teachers, where appropriate.

- d. **Accountability** – Access to GoogleWorkspace comes with privileges and responsibilities. All users are expected to adhere to the guidelines presented in this policy and other applicable policies and sections of this Charter. They are answerable to Council and the wider Sangha for the management of their email accounts, as well as all folders, files, data and information within their purview.
 - e. **Organizational Cohesion and DEIA Considerations** – System users have a responsibility to support organizational cohesion by adhering to the information management guidelines outlined in this policy. They understand that consistent information management practices are foundational to responsible governance and effective collaboration, including the onboarding and integration of new users. To this end, training sessions will be offered by the IT Working Group on an as-needed basis to help new and existing users of different abilities navigate the community’s GoogleWorkspace.
4. **Filing and Documentation** – Mountain Rain’s filing and documentation protocols are based on established policies/practices combined with functionalities that come with GoogleWorkspace.
- a. **Folder Structure** – As presented in Table 1 below, MRZC folders are structured according to the Society’s organizational chart, including publications and restricted folders. Group leaders may structure and customize editing rights to open-access folders within their purview (i.e., the authorities delegated to them by Council). Restricted, or closed-access folders and files must be listed in Table 1 of this policy with reasonable justification at the discretion of Council.
 - b. **Naming Convention (“When in doubt, copy similar files!”)** – All files should be labeled according to the same naming convention, *Author-FileName-YYYY.MM.DD*, using title case (e.g., *Council-Agenda-2023.08.29*; *DEIA-Minutes-2023.05.18*; *PC-ChantBook-2022.04.17*; *DEIA-Agenda-2023.08.18*; etc.) Names may also include supplementary information after the title. For example, *FIN-Profit&Loss-2028.05.18 (YTD)*, where “YTD” is supplementary to indicate “year-to-date” information.
 - i. **Author (Group Acronym)** – Where possible, a group acronym should be used to indicate the authoring body (e.g., MRZC, FIN, FWG, CBO, ITWG, DEIA, PC, etc.) A complete list of MRZC acronyms is presented [here](#).
 - 1. The acronym refers to the authoring body, rather than the location where the file is stored. For example, *FWG-ReportToCouncil-2023.05.18* may end up in a Council folder, but it is authored by the Finance Committee/Treasurer and should retain the acronym “FIN.”
 - 2. MRZC-wide documents should use the group acronym “MRZC.” These documents include the MRZC constitution, bylaws, organizational chart, budgets, strategic plans, AGM reports, and legal contracts. With the exception of budgets and legal contracts, MRZC documents should be geared for publication on Mountain Rain’s website.

3. External documents should retain the name of their original author (e.g., *BC.Society-StatementOfDirectors-2023.07.18* or *VancityVisa-Statement-2022-05-14*), or be named according to a commonly-used internal grouping – e.g., *LoonLake-Receipts-2022-11-14 (UHaul)* or *Zendo-Receipts-2017.01.09 (Candles)*.
 - ii. **File Name** – The file name should be brief, meaningful and consistent. For example, all Council agendas should start with “Council-Agenda;” all versions of PC chant books should start with “PC-ChantBook,” etc.
 - iii. **Date** – The date may refer to the day a report was published (e.g., *MRZC-Budget2023-2022.12.01*), the day a version of a recurring document was updated (e.g., *PC-ChantBook-2003.01.18*), or the meeting date for which a meeting document was prepared (e.g., *Council-Minutes-2023.08.29*). If the full date is not available, we do our best to include the year and month, or the year only.
 - c. **Backup** – GoogleWorkspace does not include a backup function. The IT Officers will use an external software (BackBlaze) to backup the system in cloud storage on a weekly basis.
 - d. **Record-Keeping, Consolidation and Purging (“Less is more!”)** – Folder managers are required to keep their files orderly, relevant, and up to date. Official legal and financial documents should be kept for at least seven years. Other files should be consolidated, simplified or purged, where possible/appropriate. There is no obligation to store past versions of files deemed unnecessary by the administrative or practice leader.
5. **Email Accounts and Addresses** – To access Mountain Rain’s GoogleWorkspace, all system users need to have at least one email account (their “primary account”) through the domain @mountainrainzen.org. Email accounts are issued by the IT Officer at the discretion of Council. As presented in Table 2 below, users may be associated with several email addresses, including:
- a. **Primary Account (Legal/Preferred Name)** – All system users will be issued a primary account with a standard naming convention, First.LastName@mountainrainzen.org (e.g., michael.newton@). Once their email address is issued, a user may keep their primary account indefinitely, unless they are terminated or expelled from the system for the reasons outlined below.
 - b. **Alias Email (Dharma Name)** – All users will have the option to request an alias email address using their dharma name, in addition to their primary account. They will have the option to use their dharma name only (e.g., daikan@), or their dharma name and first name (e.g., myoshin.kate@). Once their email address is issued, a user may keep their alias account indefinitely, unless they are terminated or expelled from the system for the reasons outlined below.
 - c. **Official Accounts** – A small number of officers and practice leaders will have access to official accounts during their term in office, according to the guidelines outlined in Table 2.

- i. To further strengthen transparency and accountability at Mountain Rain, each official account must be accessible to a minimum of two users, with the exception of accounts exclusive to paid staff who are subject to alternative accountability measures (e.g., admin@). This practice will also ensure coverage for volunteers in case an account manager is ill or on leave.
 - ii. Users lose access to official accounts with the termination of their term in office, unless an extension of up to three months is requested by their successor for training or onboarding purposes.
 - iii. Where needed, new official accounts may be issued (or existing ones eliminated) at the discretion of Council.
 - d. **Group Distribution Lists (DLs)** – A select list of DLs are issued to facilitate communication with administrative and practice groups, according to the MRZC organizational chart and the guidelines outlined in Table 2. Where needed, new DLs may be issued (or existing ones eliminated) at the discretion of Council.
6. **Account Termination or Expulsion** – Accounts may be terminated for users who are deceased or no longer affiliated with Mountain Rain (e.g., their employment contract ended, or they requested to leave the sangha). Furthermore, users may be expelled from the system for misconduct. Such extraordinary expulsions must be approved by Council with reasonable justification.
7. **Calendaring** – Mountain Rain’s calendaring protocols are based on established policies/practices combined with functionalities that come with GoogleWorkspace
- a. **Calendar Accounts** – As presented in Table 3 below, MRZC calendars are listed that support the operational needs of the Society. Group leaders may structure and customize editing rights to open-access calendar within their purview (i.e., the authorities delegated to them by Council). Any restricted or closed-access calendar must be listed in Table 1 of this policy with reasonable justification at the discretion of Council.
 - b. **Event Naming** – Short informative name, providing concise description of the event, meeting, or resident first & last with room number / name when used on the BST Residency calendar
 - c. **Event Details** – Within a calendar event, calendar events should include specific information about the event beyond date(s) and time, in particular event location and room(s).

TABLE 1 – Folder Structure and Management

PRIMARY FOLDERS (or “Subfolders”)	MANAGERS <i>IT Officers</i>	CONTENT MANAGERS <i>Advanced Training</i>	COMMENTERS <i>Basic Training</i>	VIEWERS <i>Basic Training</i>	CONTENT / PRIMARY USAGE
Information Hub (Web Publications)					

Information Hub	ITOs	Comms Officer Council President Council Secretary	N/A	All users	Web publications (e.g., information documents, practice resources and AGM reports). Some files may be linked to a members-only webpage at the discretion of Council & the Teachers.
Dedicated Workspaces					
1. Council 2. Finance Committee 3. CBO Branch 4. DEIA Committee 5. Practice Branch	ITOs	Group Leaders	Group Members	All users	Documents pertaining to Council and Standing Committees. Subfolder structure & edit rights may be determined by group leaders within their respective mandates.
Restricted Folders					
Grievances	ITOs	Reconciliation Officers (ERB Co-Chairs)	N/A	N/A	Confidential grievances submitted to the Ethics & Reconciliation Board (ERB).
Membership List	ITOs	Secretary (<i>lead</i>) Admin. Director Council Officers*	Council Teachers	N/A	Membership lists for containing personal information (e.g., phone numbers and email addresses).
HR Files	ITOs	HR Officer (<i>lead</i>) Assistant HRO Council Officers*	HR Board Council Teachers	N/A	HR files that contain personal information, including job contracts, CVs, performance reviews, etc..
Banking & Receipts	ITOs	Treasurer (<i>lead</i>) Vice Treasurer Council Officers*	Teachers	N/A	Bank statements and receipts for containing sensitive information.
Event Registrations	ITOs	Registrar (<i>lead</i>) Admin. Director Guiding Teachers Tanto(s)		N/A	Files that contain personal information, including event registrations and proof of vaccination.
Residency Applications	ITOs	Guiding Teachers	N/A	N/A	Teacher-confidential information (e.g., residency applications).
Drop Box					
Drop Box	ITOs	All users	N/A	N/A	A folder where all users can drop content to be picked up/sorted by content managers of that folder. It's a convenient way for a wider audience to share files!

*Council Officers include the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

TABLE 2 – Email Accounts and Addresses

TYPE	ADDRESS	ACCESS	PRIMARY USAGE / NOTES
Primary Account	first.lastname@	Individual access	Mandatory for access to the system. May be used as an individual account, at the discretion of each user.
Alias Email	dharmaName@	Individual access	Optional for users who have received jukai. May be used as an individual account, at the discretion of each user.
Official Accounts	info@	Primary managers: → Info. Email Manager	Frequent usage – public account to address general information requests from MRZC members and the general public; disseminate information about MRZC events, retreats and other practice opportunities; manage newsletters; etc. Messages pertaining to legal, financial and governance matters should be sent through the council@ account.
	teachers@	Primary managers: → Guiding Teachers	As needed – communications of relevance to both Guiding Teachers within their broad mandate as practice leaders of the sangha.

		Messages pertaining to legal, financial and governance matters should be sent in collaboration with Council through the council@ account (see below).
council@	Primary managers: → Council Secretary → President FWD/CC: → Vice President	Rare usage – as the elected body representing the community, Council uses this address to communicate important governance messages to MRZC members (e.g., AGM invitations, annual thank you messages, extraordinary governance announcements, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incoming messages of routine/procedural nature may be handled by the Secretary or President (e.g., requests for info, logistics, etc.) • Substantive messages must be forwarded to all Members of Council and addressed at the next Council meeting (e.g., feedback, policy proposals, opinions, grievances, etc.) • In exceptional circumstances (and upon request), Council may agree to send messages on behalf of the Guiding Teachers, standing committees, or other groups, where deemed appropriate, to signal endorsement on important matters.
president@	Primary manager: → President FWD/CC: → Vice President	Exceptional usage – to represent the Society externally for legal and governmental matters. Internal messages on behalf of Council should be sent using the council@ account with approval from Council. Furthermore, since other sangha leaders will not have administrative accounts, presidents are advised to use their personal accounts to conduct internal business.
treasurer@	Account manager: → Treasurer FWD/CC: → Vice Treasurer	Mandatory usage – receives messages pertaining to electronic bills, electronic CRA notices, credit card expiry reminders, etc. Sends messages pertaining to the Society's financial transactions within the Treasurer's mandate as delegated by Council. Membership-wide announcements pertaining to budgets, policy changes, or other governance matters should be communicated through the council@ account.
registrar@	Primary managers: → Registrar → Admin. Director	As needed – operational matters pertaining to retreat/event registrations within the authorities delegated by Council through the Practice Committee. Non-operational messages pertaining to practice should be developed in collaboration with the Guiding Teachers.
admin@	Primary manager: → Admin. Director	As needed – to handle/facilitate internal operational matters pertaining to MRZC administration. This account may also be used to support Council, standing committees and other working groups in matters of procedural nature (e.g., membership renewal reminders as a follow-up to a message already sent by Council).
temple@	Account manager: → Shika FWD/CC: → Guiding Teachers	As needed – operational matters related to Bright Stream (Koryuji), including coordination requests related to workshops, overnight stays, temple calendars, etc. Initial requests for overnight stays, workshops, etc. should be handled through the Teachers using the teachers@ account.
sewing@	Account manager: → Sewing Teacher FWD/CC: → Sewing Tutors	As needed – information requests related to sewing.
grievances@	Account manager: → ERB Chair → ERB Vice Chair	As needed – confidential grievances to be referred to the Ethics and Reconciliation Board (ERB).
zenYU@	Account manager: → ZenYU Coordinator → ZenYU Assistant Coordinator	

	tech@	Primary manager: → IT Officer FWD/CC: → Admin. Director	As needed — to handle/facilitate IT and GoogleWorkspace support, including access and permissions, and to coordinate interactions with external providers.
Group DLs	council2022_dl@ council2023_dl@ etc...	Members of Council for each election year.	Indefinite – For reasons of accountability, the members of each council remain indefinitely on the DL for the council year in which they were elected. Council DLs may get deleted after 15 years. Messages cannot be sent from a DL, only received.
	finance_dl@ cbo_dl@ deia_dl@ pc_dl@ zenyu_dl@ ebpg_dl@ residents_dl@ plg_dl@ nyohoe_chairs_dl@ tanto_dl@	Respective members of committees and practice group: FIN, CBO, DEIA, PC, ZenYU, EBPG & Koryuji (Sherbrooke St.)	Rotational – DLs are updated by the Admin. Director to reflect current membership. Committees and working groups may choose a different name for their DL provided it is meaningful and relevant to their mandate (e.g., diversity@ instead of deia@). Messages cannot be sent from a DL, only received.

TABLE 3 - Calendar Accounts

PRIMARY CALENDARS	MANAGERS <i>IT Officers</i>	SHARING MANAGER Make changes,, manage sharings <i>Advanced Training</i>	CONTENT MGR Make changes <i>Basic Training</i>	VIEWERS See all event details <i>Basic Training</i>	CONTENT / PRIMARY USAGE
TBD					
TBD					
Dedicated Calendars					
Events	ITOs	Admin, Guiding Teachers, Tanto, PC Chairs, Council Secretary	N/A	Users	MRZC events and activities that will appear on the public facing calendars in the website.
BST Residency	ITOs	Guiding Teachers, PC Chairs, BST Shika		Guiding Teachers, PC Chairs, BST Shika	BST Room assignments for guest and short term residency. Not for permanent residents.
Rental	ITOs	Admin, Guiding Teachers		Users	Non MRZC events or activities using MRZC locations and rooms. Used to coordinate room usage.
Meetings	ITOs	Admin, Guiding Teachers, Tanto, PC Chairs, Council Secretary		User	MRZC events and activities that will NOTt appear on the public facing calendars in the website but is used to coordinate room usage.

RESIDENTIAL RETREAT (SESSHIN) REGISTRATION POLICY

[First adopted by Council on February 3, 2025]

1. **Purpose** – The purpose of this policy is to ensure a clear, equitable, and efficient process for planning, registering, and participating in residential retreats. It outlines event scheduling, registration timelines, payment requirements, cancellation terms, waitlist procedures, and subsidy allocations to promote accessibility and transparency for all participants.
2. **Event dates and notification** – Dates of residential retreats will be posted at the start of each calendar year on the MRZC website.
3. **Retreat Costs** – Residential retreats are operated on a cost-recovery basis, with fees set to ensure they break even.
4. **Registration opening** – Opening of registration takes place as early as practical, but a minimum of three months before sesshin. A members-only advance registration period will be made available for two weeks prior to opening retreat registration to the general community.
5. **Registration closing** – Registration for in-person participation remains open until the retreat is fully subscribed, after which a waitlist will be maintained.
6. **Full payment deadline** – Payment is required upon registration for sesshin. Subsidy applicants will make payment when their subsidy is approved and they are notified of the amount owing (see Residential Retreat (Sesshin) Subsidy Policy).
7. **Cancellation** –
 - a. Over one month before the event begins: Full Refund. Full fee is returned.
 - b. **Less than one month before the event:** No refunds will be issued unless funds remain after covering all retreat costs. Refunds will only be considered after the retreat concludes and finances are reviewed. If excess funds are available, they will be distributed equitably among those who canceled. If the retreat reaches full capacity, full refunds will be granted.
8. **Waitlist** – When there is a cancellation, the next person on the waitlist is notified and is given 48 hours to commit by submitting payment.

RESIDENTIAL RETREAT (SESSHIN) SUBSIDY POLICY

[First adopted by Council on February 3, 2025]

1. **Purpose** – Off-site residential retreats are operated on a cost-recovery basis, with fees targeted at breaking even in order to ensure the sustainability of these events for the organization. Nevertheless, MRZC wants to make the retreat accessible to individuals who might face financial challenges. We are committed to ensuring that subsidies for the retreat are granted in an equitable manner and to supporting participants from diverse and historically underrepresented communities.
2. **Subsidy budget** – The MRZC Council will assign an annual budget amount for the residential retreat subsidy expense account and aim for it to be split equally across the two sesshins (Winter and Summer). As an additional restriction, the Treasurer will designate a maximum amount of subsidy funds any individual may receive in a given calendar, regardless of budget remaining.
3. **Eligibility** – Subsidies are available to those for whom the full retreat fee would pose a financial hardship.
4. **Application process** – The window for applying for subsidies will be open during the first month of the registration period, starting with the member-only registration period. Once the application window is closed, late applications will not be accepted.
5. **Application review** – All subsidy requests will be compiled by the Registrar, and allocation decisions will be made by the Treasurer with input from the Guiding Teachers.
6. **Award Process** – The Registrar will notify applicants of the amount they've been awarded. Awards are implemented as partial reimbursements of retreat fees via Squarespace.
7. **Policy review** – This policy will be reviewed annually to determine if amendments are warranted to meet the community's needs.

ENDOWMENT FUND POLICY

[First adopted by Council on April 21, 2024]

1. **Definition** – An endowment fund is a charitable investment vehicle that allows donors to make tax deductible bequests or contributions to an organization with the goal of fostering long term financial stability. It provides funding for future projects, enhances the Society’s long-term financial stability, and allows donors convenient means to include MRZC in their Estate Planning.
2. **Administration** – The [Vancouver Foundation](#) was determined to be the most suitable organization to administer Mountain Rain’s endowment fund.
 - a. **Donor confidence** – The size and longevity of the Vancouver Foundation provides increased donors confidence. Incorporated in 1943 as a not-for-profit organization in Vancouver, the Foundation has grown to administer over 1,800 funds and assets totaling over \$1.5 billion.
 - b. **Expert support and resources** – The Vancouver Foundation has significant expertise in administering endowment funds, including a large body of professional staff to manage investment, accounting, tax receipts, and gift processing. The Foundation also provides each organization with an online account with easy access to fund information.
 - c. **Diversified giving options** – The Foundation can help facilitate a variety of giving options to the fund, including life insurance policies, registered funds, stocks, and gifts from U.S. donors. In addition, the Foundation assists with planned gifts from wills by handling all the administrative and legal obligations.
3. **Fund type** – Mountain Rain has a *Transferable Fund* with *Socially Responsible Investments*.
 - a. **Transferable Fund** - A *Transferable Fund* is refundable and, therefore, allows Mountain Rain flexibility in future usage. (The alternative, *Legacy Fund*, would lock MRZC donations in perpetuity.)
 - b. **Socially Responsible Investments** – Socially responsible funds are in line with Mountain Rain’s values because they are screened for investments in the fossil fuels, military and tobacco industries, among others. Even though they tend to have a smaller and less stable investment base than larger, more conventional funds, they have delivered comparable rates of return over a 10-year period (8% average), based on 2023 research.
4. **Annual disbursement** – After one year, 10% of the fund’s total value may be disbursed annually; after 6 years, the full balance may be accessed. The disbursement may be used for operational expenses or other projects, as determined by Council.
5. **Guiding Principles** – A decision to use or disburse Mountain Rain’s endowment fund ultimately rests with the Society’s future Councils and members, in consultation with the Guiding Teachers and other practice leaders, where appropriate. While the authors of this policy cannot assume

foresight of the Sangha's future circumstances, the following guiding principles are intended to inform decision makers:

- a. It is recommended that Mountain Rain maintain a minimum of 6-months worth of operating expenses in a liquid account that would serve as an emergency fund (e.g., a checking account, or a liquid savings account). In other words, the endowment fund should not compromise Mountain Rain's financial flexibility in the short-term.
 - b. It is hoped that Mountain Rain reserves its endowment fund for major capital or renovation projects, special projects, or extraordinary expenses, as determined by Council. Future Councils are advised to consult with the wider membership on major expenditures (e.g., major home renovations, or the purchase of new property).
 - c. Council is advised to provide regular updates to MRZC donors and members regarding the fund's performance and uses. The Treasurer or Fundraising Committee are advised to include a standing update in their report at the Annual General Meeting.
6. **Delegation of Authority** – The authority to approve the creation or disbursement of Mountain Rain's endowment fund rests with Council on behalf of the Society's membership. These authorities cannot be delegated to MRZC Standing Committees or Officers. As such, all funding allocations need to be approved by Council in compliance with this policy.

PURCHASES AND REQUISITIONS POLICY

[First adopted by Council on November 19, 2023]

1. **Purpose** – This Policy outlines how materials and services are to be requisitioned and purchased by members of the Mountain Rain Zen Community, in furtherance of our charitable goals and in accordance with financial best practices.
2. **Bank Signing Authority** – Bank Signing Authority is the ability to directly spend the organization’s money without the buffer provided by a credit card or reimbursement process. The Treasurer, President, and at least one Guiding Teacher have Signing Authority, which must be updated soon after each AGM if the roles change hands. Signing Authority is revoked upon a member’s exiting their position.
3. **Reimbursement Policy**
 - a. **Small purchases (up to \$50)** – Any member may be reimbursed for up to \$50 for expenses incurred as part of their volunteer work with the Society, provided they submit a receipt or invoice within 30 days of the expense with approval from the accountable practice leader (e.g., the Guiding Teachers, the Temple Keeper, the Shika, the Registrar, the Sewing Teacher, or PC Co-Chairs, where appropriate). Reimbursement cannot be issued without a receipt.
 - b. **Large purchases (up to \$500)** – The Guiding Teachers or the Practice Committee may make purchases or authorize others to make purchases of up to \$500 per transaction within the budget allowance, provided an invoice or receipt is submitted within 7 days of the expense. Reimbursement cannot be issued without a receipt.
4. **Budget Adjustments** – Once approved by Council, budget allowances may be adjusted through:
 - a. **Fundraising** – Proceeds from special fundraising events or campaigns *with the explicit purpose of supporting a special project of the Practice Branch* may be added to the budget allowance without Council approval. Proceeds from general campaigns and donations cannot be added without Council approval.
 - b. **Supplementary requests** – The Guiding Teachers or the Practice Committee may work with the Treasurer to submit a request to Council for a supplementary budget allowance, which will be processed as an “adjustment to the annual budget allowance.” Until the supplementary allowance is approved by Council, Practice Leaders may not authorize any new spending that exceeds the original allowance for the Practice Branch.
5. **Transactions that exceed \$1000** – All transactions that exceed \$1000 require Council approval. An approval request should be submitted to the Treasurer or Council President before the purchase is made.

6. **Transactions that exceed \$10,000** – Council is required to discuss how best to advise or seek consent from the community on major expenditures that exceed \$10,000 (e.g., major home renovations, or the purchase of new property). The minutes from the discussion must be documented and made available to the membership.
 - a. **Retroactive emergency transactions (up to \$3000)** – Notwithstanding the previous paragraphs, Council may approve expenditures of up to \$1000 retroactively if the expense or purchase is required to address a justifiable emergency (e.g., protect the immediate safety and integrity of the Society’s members or property). These requests should be submitted to the Council President and Treasurer as soon as possible with reasonable justification and documentation, where applicable.
7. **Delegation of Authority** – The authority to approve financial spending rests with Council. As such, MRZC Committees, Officers and Practice Leaders may not approve spending beyond the authorizations outlined in this policy.

GIFTS-IN-KIND POLICY

[Adopted before April 24, 2022]

1. **Gifts-in-Kind Policy** – The Mountain Rain Zen Community (MRZC) accepts gifts-in-kind, which means that individuals can donate non-cash product(s) or good(s) that are appropriate and approved for MRZC use (e.g., new or gently used zendo supplies, books or electronics). While we appreciate all interest in contributing to MRZC, we may only accept items that are deemed appropriate for MRZC use and meet all prescribed safety and operational requirements.
2. **Charitable Receipts for Gifts-in-Kind (CRA Guidelines)** – According to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) guidelines, to issue a charitable receipt, MRZC requires official documentation (such as a sales receipt), or independent appraisal of the fair market value of the donated item. If the original receipt is provided, MRZC will depreciate the value based on the age and condition of the item. If the donor does not have the original receipt or appraisal documents, MRZC will establish current valuation through 3rd party sources.
 - a. **Fair Market Value** – Fair market value is normally the highest price, expressed in dollars that the item would bring in an open and unrestricted market between a willing buyer and a willing seller who are knowledgeable, informed, and prudent and who are acting independently of each other.
 - b. **Fair Market Value below \$1000** – If the fair market value of the item is less than \$1000, a member of the registered charity or another individual with sufficient knowledge may determine its value.
 - c. **Fair Market Value above \$1000** – If the fair market value is expected to be more than \$1000, the CRA strongly recommends that the items be professionally appraised by a third party (i.e., someone not associated with either the donor or the charity). If the property is appraised, the name and address of the appraiser must be included on the official receipt.
3. **Procedure for Gift-in-Kind Donations**
 - a. **Proposal** – Individuals/organizations interested in donating a gift-in-kind may contact MRZC Treasurer, or any other Member of Council with their proposal.
 - b. **Evaluation** – MRZC Council will be consulted with respect to the need/use for the proposed item. If Council deems the item appropriate for MRZC use, a fair market valuation will be determined as outlined above.
 - c. **Receipt** – A gift-in-kind tax receipt will be issued once the donated item(s) have been received, their condition/value confirmed, and all required documentation obtained by the Society.

HIRING AND SUPERVISION POLICY (“HR Policy”)

[First adopted by Council on April 7, 2023]

1. **Delegation of Human Resources Authority** – Council delegates authority for most human resources (HR) considerations to the Human Resources Board (HR Board) through a designated Human Resources Officer (HRO).
 - a. **Human Resources Officer** – Council designates an HRO to oversee the orientation, supervision and evaluation of hired contractors in accordance with this policy. The HRO reports regularly to Council through the President, unless they are a member of Council.
 - b. **Human Resources Board** – The HR Board is chaired by the HRO, and should include at least one Guiding Teacher, as well as the Presidents of Council and the Practice Committee. At the onset of a hiring process, the HR Board interviews potential candidates. Once a preferred candidate has been selected, the HR Board submits their application to Council for approval.
2. **Responsibilities of the Human Resources Officer (HRO)** – The HRO is the de facto supervisor of MRZC-hired contractor(s). They are encouraged to designate a Vice HRO to help them make the job more manageable and facilitate continuity planning. They are responsible for the following tasks:
 - a. **Hiring** – Proposing job descriptions for Council approval, in consultation with implicated MRZC Officers, and chairing the Hiring Sub-committee.
 - b. **Management** – The HRO is the only Member of MRZC that can assign tasks to the hired contractor, based on the advice of Council, the Guiding Teachers, and other implicated Officers and Standing Committees. The HRO monitors the contractor(s)’ working and banked hours, ensures their deliverables meet MRZC expectations, offers feedback, and conducts performance assessments, as needed. The HRO is also in charge of addressing any concerns the contractor(s) may have with individual MRZC Members, Officers, or Guiding Teachers.
 - c. **Reporting** – Sharing regular reports with Council through the President, unless the HRO is a member of Council.
3. **Distinction between contractor and employee** – An employee is covered under the [Employment Standards Act](#) which sets out the rights and protections all employees are entitled to. Independent Contractors are self-employed persons providing services under the terms of a written contract for a fixed fee; they perform specific tasks within a specified period.

GRIEVANCES & RECONCILIATION POLICY

[First adopted by Council on August 29, 2021]

1. **Purpose** – This policy is intended to help ensure a safe practice environment and address possible ethical violations in the Mountain Rain Zen Community (MRZC).
 - a. **Primary Outcomes** – This policy creates two resources for the community:
 - i. The Ethics and Reconciliation Committee to administer this policy and provide guidance and support to teachers, leaders and membership;
 - ii. A pool of volunteer facilitators from the community, available to help resolve grievances if and when they arise.
 - b. **Scope** – Nothing in this policy should prevent or discourage a complainant from contacting the police, in the case of criminal misconduct, or taking any other step authorized by law or statute.
2. **Definition of Grievance** – A Grievance is defined as any complaint by a member about Mountain Rain, its guests and members, its activities, and relationships between people who are part of the community. Members can communicate grievances for reasons not limited to and including:
 - a. in the operations of the zendo the health and safety of members and guests;
 - b. unresolved conflicts between sangha members that negatively affect others;
 - c. personality conflicts related to romantic attachments or to dual relationships (e.g. teacher/student);
 - d. misconduct by a member, a guest, or a teacher;
 - e. conflicts between a member and members of another sangha.
3. **Ethics and Reconciliation Board**
 - a. **Composition** – Council designates a Reconciliation Officer to Chair an Ethics and Reconciliation Board (ERB) of qualified facilitators to be called on when needed. The ERB serves the following functions:
 - i. To provide advice, mentorship, and consultation to members regarding the ethics of their practice;
 - ii. To support informal resolution of conflicts through facilitation and restorative justice;
 - iii. To investigate formal complaints and make recommendations based on their findings;
 - iv. To establish and coordinate a pool of facilitators composed of MRZC post-jukai members or on occasion a teacher or senior member from another, local Buddhist community. This pool will reflect diversity of colour, gender, sexuality, age, etc.

- b. **Confidentiality** – All discussions in informal or formal resolution procedures will be kept in strictest confidence (i.e. entirely confidential) unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties.
- 4. **Informal Resolution Process** – Whenever possible, sangha members are encouraged initially to resolve conflicts and concerns through an informal process.
 - a. **Step 1: Direct Communication** – First, a member who is in conflict with another or thinks that a member or teacher has acted inappropriately is encouraged to discuss the situation directly with the other person. Both are asked to speak and listen with the precepts in mind.
 - b. **Step 2: Consulting a Practice Leader** – Second, when a member feels unable to discuss the situation directly with the other person or has not found a satisfactory resolution, the member may choose to speak either to an MRZC teacher, priest, or former shuso from the perspective of practice discussion or dokusan.
 - c. **Step 3: Requesting Information Facilitation** – Third, the party or parties involved may request from the ERB that informal facilitation be provided by a member/s of the facilitation pool. The ERB will make every effort to ensure that facilitators reflect the diversity of sangha membership. (For that matter, at any point in the above steps the party/ies are free to access the ERB at any time. As for possible crossover of members of the ERC and the facilitation pool, members of the former may also but not necessarily be members of the latter.)
- 5. **Formal Grievance Resolution Process** – An attempt at an informal resolution is recommended before beginning a formal grievance. When the conflict cannot be resolved by a private, informal, or facilitated discussion, a formal grievance can be submitted to the ERB, with or without the help of a prior facilitator or sangha member. The ERB does not assign blame but works to resolve conflicts and promote harmony in the community.
 - a. **Required Information** – A formal, written grievance should include:
 - i. A clear statement requesting a formal grievance resolution process;
 - ii. The name of the member requesting the process and the names of others involved;
 - iii. A description of the grievance with sufficient detail to allow the ERB to decide whether the matter is appropriate for a formal process;
 - iv. A description of prior attempts to resolve the matter;
 - v. A general statement of the resolution.
 - b. **Submitting a Grievance** – The written grievance is to be submitted to the ERC who will give a copy to the person(s) named in the grievance. The person(s) named will have a reasonable amount of time to prepare and submit a written response, after which the ERC will review all submitted documents and convene a hearing.
 - c. **Interviews** – The ERB may conduct interviews during this hearing with all person(s) involved in the grievance. Either party is welcome to bring someone for support, but that person will be there as a witness only, and will not actively participate in the proceeding.

- d. **Deliberation and Decision** – Once the ERB determines that it is sufficiently informed of the matter(s) at hand, it will deliberate privately and work toward a consensus decision. Within five business days of the hearing, the ERC will issue a written decision with recommendations and distribute it as warranted.

SECTION 4 – SHARED PRACTICES

COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

1. **Commitment to Good Communication Practices** – MRZC Council is committed to the following communication practices, which are gratefully borrowed from “Agreements for Multicultural Interactions,” created by the East Bay Meditation Center in Oakland, California. Council encourages all MRZC Standing Committees, working groups and gatherings to adopt and build on these practices for their own purposes.
 - a. **Arrive Gently, Be With** – We begin and end our meetings on time. Arrive and leave when best for you. Appreciating how refreshing it is to be in a place that is well cared for, we take care of ourselves and our community by keeping the space uncluttered and accessible to both online and in-person participants.
 - b. **Honor Intimacy, Privacy and Confidentiality** – We do not share the names or personal stories of anyone other than ourselves, now or later. If we want to follow up with anyone regarding something they said in community, we ask first and respect their wishes.
 - c. **Assume None, Be One** – We do not assume the race, class, gender, sexuality, or ability of anyone else. We have the individual option to share pronouns, and we will collectively respect pronouns.
 - d. **Dialogue over Debate Through Mindful Listening** – We listen deeply with our full attention, in body, heart, and mind. We listen to understand, not to respond. We are willing to be surprised, to learn something new, to be changed by all viewpoints and ideas. Not knowing is most intimate.
 - e. **Practice Care and Consent** – We practice care and consent by participating in what feels right and speaking our needs and concerns as they arise, as much as we can. We can say “I pass” or “No, thank you” if we don’t wish to speak. We ask before touching, and we are free to say no to touch. We ask for permission before offering advice, unless directly asked.
 - f. **Practice Self Focus and Speak from the “I”** – We attend to and speak about our own experiences and responses. We speak using “I” statements and do not speak for a whole group or express assumptions about the experience of others.
 - g. **Practice “Both / And”** – We substitute “and” for “but” when speaking. This practice acknowledges and honors multiple realities. This also supports creating spaciousness around our binary ways.
 - h. **Understand the Difference between Intent and Impact** – No matter our intentions, we take responsibility for the impact our actions have on others. Denying our impact by focusing on intent can be more destructive than the initial interaction.
 - i. **Refrain from Blaming or Shaming Self and Others** – We practice giving skillful feedback and not performing quality control on another’s expressions, or our own, understanding that powerful emotions can arise as a shout, a stammer, a cry; and that these expressions, too, deserve space and care.

- j. **Taking Space, Making Space** – We encourage full participation by all present, knowing that courage takes different forms for each of us. Take note of who is speaking and who is not. If you tend to speak often, consider “tuning in” through mindful listening. If you tend to rest in silence, consider “making space” by sharing your experience.

GUIDELINES FOR A TRANS-INCLUSIVE SANGHA

[First adopted by Council on March 30, 2025]

1. **Mountain Rain strives to be a trans-inclusive Sangha** – We believe that creating a trans-inclusive sangha is a responsibility and an opportunity for each sangha member to learn from others and practice compassion and generosity. We further believe that transforming our sangha into a community in which trans people are safe and affirmed is aligned with our bodhisattva vows to save all beings, to avoid all actions that create suffering, and to act with the well-being of others always in mind.
2. **Trans-inclusive guidelines for Mountain Rain** – The following guidelines were adapted from the work of multiple Trans Buddhist practitioners. We highly recommend reading the [original full version](#), as well as Advocates for Trans Equality’s [Guide to Being a Good Ally](#).
 - a. **Understand the basics** – There are basic facts about trans identity that are foundational to building your trans competence.
 - i. **Gender is not the same as sex** – Gender is someone’s internal experience of being a man, woman, or something else. When someone’s sex assigned at birth is aligned with their gender, this is referred to as being cisgender (non-trans). When someone’s assigned sex is not aligned with their gender, this is generally known as being transgender or gender non-conforming. In this document, we will use trans (pronounced “trans”) to refer to this group of identities as well as other non-cisgender identities.
 - ii. **Biological sex is situated on a spectrum that includes male, female and intersex traits** – It is usually assigned at birth but also includes multiple biological factors such as chromosomes, gonads, and sex hormones (which aren’t immediately apparent even to health professionals). Although humans are generally dimorphic (meaning that for most people, female or male is an accurate descriptor of their sex), we’re learning more and more that biological sex is less of a static trait and more of an ongoing process - a physiological dance within our cells. It’s something our whole bodies are “doing” in each moment of our lives. For example, every person has both “male” and “female” sex hormones, and the amounts of each vary widely between individuals and throughout one’s lifetime.
 - iii. **Trans people have diverse identities** – Many trans people see themselves as men and women first, and consider their trans identity or trans experience to be secondary. Other trans people, especially those who identify as gender diverse or gender nonconforming, may feel that transgender is their primary gender identity or may have a gender identity that falls outside the binary categorization of men and women.
 - iv. **Gender is not determined by the body parts that one has, how one dresses, or who one loves** – It is about one’s understanding of oneself. Each person is always the authority on their own gender. Some trans people access medical care related to their gender, such as hormones or surgery. Other people transition socially by

changing their name or using a particular set of pronouns. While these inner transformations and outward expressions of gender are important and even life-saving to some, it is not what defines being trans. People's genders are no more or less legitimate based on what another person thinks they look like.

- v. **Gender expression is something both transgender and cisgender people experience and communicate in relation to others** – When we talk about being inclusive and affirming (including respecting names and pronouns) that conversation includes and benefits cisgender folks too (especially folks who are gender non-conforming). Everyone - cisgender and transgender alike - should feel respected and affirmed however they choose to express gender. One isn't more or less of a woman, man, or any other gender because of how their body looks, how they choose to dress and speak, or what name and pronouns one uses.
- b. **At Mountain Rain Events and Programs, we ask for people to share pronouns** – By asking for people's pronouns, we are giving people the opportunity to indicate what pronouns they would like used to refer to them, rather than using pronouns based on our assumptions. If you do not know someone's gender identity, it is okay to ask what their pronouns are.
 - i. **Sharing pronouns at Mountain Rain programs is optional** – People are invited to share pronouns, but it is not required. Some people may not feel safe sharing their pronouns or may be exploring their gender and uncertain. Cis-gender people, especially sangha leadership, should consider how sharing pronouns can open up space for others and communicate inclusivity.
 - ii. **Don't assume someone's pronouns** – When in doubt, it's okay to use "they/them" to refer to someone. Don't use "they/them" pronouns if someone has requested "he/him" or "she/her" pronouns. We should always use the pronouns given by that person, just as we would use their proper name. This is a wonderful way to honour people and show them care and respect.
 - iii. **Apologize if you misgender someone unintentionally** – If you accidentally use the wrong pronouns for someone, just apologize and correct yourself. Even though everyone misses things sometimes, it can still be hurtful even when the mistake is innocent. The good news is we always have plenty of fresh opportunities to get it right!
 - iv. **Don't misgender people intentionally** – It's important, however, not to intentionally misgender someone. That can make a person feel unwelcome, invisible, disrespected and/or unsafe. At Mountain Rain, we consider intentional, repeated misgendering to be harmful conduct, not aligned with our Bodhisattva vows.
 - v. **Correct people if they misgender someone** – If you witness a person misgendering someone, it is appropriate to correct them so that the onus does not always fall on the person who is being misgendered.
- c. **Be considerate about the questions you ask** – There are many topics—medical transition, life pre-transition, sexual activity—that you may be curious about. That doesn't mean it's appropriate to ask a transgender person about them, or expect a transgender person to be comfortable sharing intimate details about themselves. If a transgender person wants to talk to you about such matters, they will bring them up. You can also ask yourself these two questions to help determine if a topic is appropriate to bring up:
 - i. **Ask yourself: Do I need to know this information to treat the individual respectfully?** Asking someone's name and pronoun is almost always appropriate, as we use that information in talking to and about each other every day. Beyond

that, though, you may be curious about questions that are not things you truly need to know.

- ii. **Ask yourself: *Would I be comfortable if this question was turned around and asked of me?*** For example, it would probably not feel appropriate for a sangha member to ask you about the private areas of your body. Likewise, it's probably not appropriate to ask similar questions about a transgender person's body.

d. Practice Trans Competence for a Safer Sangha – As Buddhists, when we practice kind awareness or mindfulness, we practice being intimate with what we encounter in each moment on both the internal and interpersonal levels. In order to fully do this in an organized practice setting, one must feel safe and at ease and be able to be vulnerable. To create these conditions, sanghas must actively work to undo subtle and explicit oppression. Developing Trans Competence is a tool to be used to make Buddhist spaces safer, more just, and more accessible to trans practitioners (Renson, Krempasky, and Schubert).

- i. **Trans-Competent identity documents** – We will ask for pronouns and names on registration forms. If someone's name and pronouns do not match their identity and gender markers on documents and banking cards, we will use their chosen name and pronouns in all interactions with them, whenever possible.
- ii. **Trans-Competent Accommodations** – We will provide accommodations in our residential practice programs as follows:

“For shared rooms, which assignment best suits your gender?”

Women accommodations

Men accommodations

All-gender accommodations

We will provide single accommodations at an affordable rate whenever possible.

- iii. **Trans-competent bathroom and shower facilities** – All Mountain Rain bathrooms are “*All-Gender, All the Time.*”
 - 1. **Multi-stall bathrooms** are designated “*All-Gender, All the Time*” (regardless of what symbol may be on the door) and will include a note identifying the number of stalls vs. urinals so you can plan your visit.

SECTION 5 – COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

MANDATE, MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

1. **Mandate and Accountability:** According to the [Societies Act](#), Council is entrusted with overseeing the Society's governance on behalf of MRZC members, in line with the MRZC [Constitution](#) and [Bylaws](#). As such, Council Directors are collectively accountable to the members, community, funders and other stakeholders.
2. **Membership and Participation** – MRZC Council membership is based on the following guidelines:
 - a. **Composition** – Council is composed of up to eight members. Guiding Teachers are invited and welcome to attend Council meetings.
 - b. **Board positions** – The Society's bylaws identify the following five board positions for Council: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and General Director.
 - c. **Representation from Standing Committees (Council Liaisons)** – To facilitate the Society's governance, it is recommended that the Chair of the Finance Committee sit on Council as Treasurer, and that at least one Member of the Governance and Operations Committee sit on Council as a General Member and Council Liaison. The Guiding Teachers are invited and welcome to represent the Practice Committee during Council meetings.
 - d. **Term of Office** – Council members are elected for a term of one year, with a preferred minimum term of service of two years. There is no limit in the bylaws on terms of service at this time.
3. **Elections** – Council Members are elected or acclaimed by the Society's membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), in accordance with MRZC bylaws. Please refer to the MRZC [Council Elections Policy](#) for more information.

COUNCIL POSITIONS

President (Chair)

4. **Accountability and Authority** – The President serves and is accountable to the Council and the membership of the Society. More specifically:
 - a. The President is primarily responsible for the effective functioning of Council in its role of governing the Society. In this capacity, the President supports the other officers in the execution of their duties.

- b. The President has no formal authority to direct Council or the affairs of the Society unless otherwise decided. Like other Council members, the President is entitled to make motions and vote on matters before the Society.
 - c. The President may not, on behalf of the Society, enter into contracts without the knowledge and approval of the Council or Society.
 - d. The President may be authorized to sign cheques and other contractual documents on behalf of the Society.
 - e. The Chair may delegate tasks to MRZC Standing Committees or officials within their respective mandates, according to Council precedent or previously approved Council documents. This authority is granted for the purpose of eliminating redundancies and ensuring that decision items presented to Council are sufficiently informed by the right MRZC groups or officials.
5. **Term of Office** – The President’s minimum term of office is one year, with a preferred minimum term of service of two years. There is no limit in the bylaws on terms of service at this time.
6. **Primary Duties** – In addition to the duties of every board member, the President is responsible for the following primary duties:
- a. Preparing Council meeting agendas and chairing all meetings;
 - b. Coaching members of Council and other committees struck by the Council, as needed;
 - c. Ensuring there is a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council;
 - d. Serving as a spokesperson, along with the Teachers, for the Society;
 - e. Ensuring that Council membership is informed in a timely fashion about the ongoing business of Council;
 - f. Preparing for and chairing the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and delivering an annual statement from Council at the AGM;
 - g. Managing and updating this Charter as new motions and guidelines are adopted.
7. **Secondary Duties** – The President may also perform the following secondary duties:
- a. Preparing recommendations for Council consideration (e.g., changes or additions to policies, by-laws or governance processes);
 - b. Being available to Teachers and other leaders for consultation purposes; and
 - c. Representing the Society at community meetings and events.

Vice President (Vice Chair)

8. **Commitment** – The Vice-President is expected to be the President-elect, and is willing to step into the President's position when the President's term has ended or is vacated for another reason.
9. **Duties** – In addition to the duties of every Board Member, the Vice President is also responsible for the following:
 - a. Chairing Council meetings when the President is unavailable;
 - b. Assisting the President in the preparation and management of Council meetings; and
 - c. Assisting the President in the planning for the AGM, including the preparation of an annual statement from Council.

Treasurer

10. **Authority and Accountability** – The Treasurer has no authority to direct volunteers, staff, contractors, membership or take independent action on matters outside of the duties outlined herein unless given such authority by Council.
11. **Duties and Responsibilities** – The treasurer is accountable to Council and the Society for the fulfillment of the following duties and responsibilities:
 - a. Ensuring good financial record-keeping procedures are in place for dealing with revenues and expenditures and banking practices, including monthly or quarterly financial statements to be presented to Council;
 - b. Presenting, on behalf of the Finance Committee, an annual budget to Council for approval and the Society's membership for information;
 - c. Ensuring that donations are handled appropriately and that grants and service delivery contracts are accounted for in accordance with the requirements of funders;
 - d. Ensuring that other financial matters are handled appropriately and in a timely manner, including the submission of filings and remittances, the settlement of payments and other liabilities, and the holding and investment of excess funds and reserves;

- e. Monitoring the Society's financial performance, alerting Council to any important discrepancies between planned and actual figures, and making recommendations accordingly;
- f. Serving as a signatory of cheques;
- g. Contributing to the development of Council's Annual Report;
- h. Keeping Council informed of important financial events, trends and issues relevant to the Society, with the assistance of the Finance Committee.

Secretary

- 12. **Role** – The Secretary is responsible for the stewardship of the governance records of the Society and for consistency and transparency in Council's practices. According to the Society's bylaws, the officers of Secretary and Treasurer may be represented by one person who is to be known as the Secretary-Treasurer.
- 13. **Duties** – In addition to the duties of every Board Member, the Secretary is also responsible for the following:
 - a. Drafting and distributing minutes of meetings of the Society and Council;
 - b. Issuing notices of meetings of the Society, though the President may also circulate the agendas and issue notices as expedient;
 - c. Having custody of all the records and documents of the Society except those required to be kept by the Treasurer;
 - d. Maintaining and updating a register of MRZC members.

General Directors

- 14. **Authority and Accountability** – Council is collectively accountable to the members, community, funders and other stakeholders. An individual Council Director has no authority to approve actions by the Society, to direct staff, service providers or volunteers, or to speak on behalf of the Society unless granted such authority by Council.
- 15. **Term of Office** – Council Directors are elected for a term of one year, with a preferred minimum term of service of two years. There is no limit in the bylaws on terms of service at this time.

16. **Primary Duties** – Every Council Director, including the named Officers described in the previous subsections, are expected to perform the following primary duties:

- a. Prepare for and participate in regular Council Meetings;
- b. Abide by the bylaws, codes of conduct, conflict of interest and other policies that apply to Council;
- c. Approve new members to the MRZC Society;
- d. Participate in the regular development and implementation of a strategic plan, in line with the Society's Constitution, mission and vision;
- e. Help Council to monitor the performance of the Society in relation to its mission, objectives and core values;
- f. Participate in the approval of the annual budget and monitor the financial performance of the Society on a regular schedule; and
- g. Help establish, review and monitor the implementation of operational policies, including policies on Council's own practices.

17. **Secondary Duties** – In addition to the above primary duties, Council Directors should:

- a. Through the lens of Dharma practice, listen to others' views, advocate their own, identify common interests and alternatives and be open to compromise (please refer to Council's [*Commitment to Good Communication Practices*](#)).
- b. Support governance decisions once made.
- c. Carry on a regular practice of zazen, regularly attend Mountain Rain programs and events, and meet regularly with the teacher(s) for dokusan.

GUIDELINES ON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

18. **Quorum** – Council is composed of up to eight members. At least four Council members are required to constitute a quorum. Teacher attendance is optional.
19. **Meeting Agendas** – The Chair sends out a proposed meeting agenda at least one week in advance of each meeting, requesting input from Council before the meeting.
 - a. **Deadline for input** – Council Members are asked to review the agenda and request additional items no later than 48 hours before the meeting. Any ad-hoc or last minute items that come up during the meeting will be handled at the next meeting or scheduled email proceeding (see below).
 - b. **Review process** – The Chair is required to work with Council Members to ensure that new items are ready for Council decision or consideration (i.e., are presented with enough context/background, including links and documentation where applicable, as well as a clear proposal and/or specific questions for Council).
 - c. **Chair's delegation authorities** – The Chair may work in consultation with the implicated Council Member to delegate tasks to MRZC Standing Committees or officials within their respective mandates, according to Council precedent or previously approved Council documents. This authority is granted for the purpose of eliminating redundancies and ensuring that decision items presented to Council are sufficiently informed by the right MRZC groups or officials.
20. **Consensus Decision Making** – Council makes decisions by consensus and encourages constructive disagreement, where appropriate.
 - a. **General guidelines** – Members may vote to approve or reject a motion, or to stand aside from voting. Motions may be carried as long as there is a quorum where every voting member either approves the motion or stands aside from voting. A single “reject” vote is enough to block a motion, and is thus considered a de-facto veto. It must be accompanied by reasonable justification.
 - b. **Voting options** – To encourage constructive disagreements, Council members may express specific reservations when they choose to approve a motion, or to stand aside from voting. As such, members may vote according to the following options:
 - i. I **approve**
 - ii. I **approve** with reservations (*please specify*)
 - iii. I **stand aside**
 - iv. I **stand aside** with reservations (*please specify*)
 - v. Missed vote (“*assumed stand aside*”)
 - vi. I **reject** (*de facto “veto,” requires justification*)
21. **Email Proceedings** – Council Chair has the authority to schedule email proceedings sparingly, at regular intervals, unless there is a justifiable emergency. The following guidelines apply.
 - a. **Regular votes** – Only when needed, email proceedings may be scheduled at the end of non-meeting months to expedite Council business. All items that require a vote need to be sent to the Chair and Secretary at least one week before the end of the month. To avoid overburdening Council with email proceedings, late items will be dealt with at the

following voting opportunity (i.e., at the next meeting or monthly email voting slot, whichever comes first.)

- b. **Emergency votes** – In very rare or special circumstances, Council may conduct online voting at non-scheduled intervals. Clear and compelling rationale is required to justify an emergency vote.
 - c. **Process management** – Council Chair and Secretary are responsible for managing and recording email proceedings. Council Members are required to follow the instructions provided for each vote. If Members have comments about improving the process, they are invited to raise them at the next Council meeting. The Chair and Secretary will strive for constant process improvement.
 - d. **Response deadline** – Council Members are required to vote or respond within 48 hours of a requested opinion or vote. If we do not hear from you within 48 hours, we will assume abstention (i.e., the vote would proceed provided we have quorum). If we do not have quorum, the item will be handled at the next in person meeting.
 - e. **Veto power** – Any Council Member can request that an online vote be handled in-person instead (e.g., for complex or controversial issues that require more in-person discussion). Requests to pause online votes need to include reasonable justification.
22. **Open Reporting to the Sangha** – Council publishes an *Open Report to the Sangha* to improve transparency within MRZC governance, and to facilitate communication among Council and Standing Committee members.
- a. **Content** – The report includes information pertaining to Council proceedings, such as Council’s priorities for the years, Council minutes and updates on major initiatives (e.g., the implementation of a Strategic Plan or comparable initiatives).
 - b. **Process management** – Council President and Secretary are responsible for managing and updating the report, with input from the Treasurer, Vice-President and other Sangha leaders, as needed.
 - c. **Sensitive information** – Council Chair and Secretary may use their discretion, in consultation with Council, to avoid publishing any sensitive personal or financial information or opinions that may compromise the privacy or confidentiality of individuals or organizations.
 - d. **Annual Report to the AGM** – At the end of each year, Council would close the *Open Report* and use it as a basis for an annual report to be presented at the AGM.